

COVID-19 Guidelines for Re-Opening your Restaurant

This guide provides you with the information you need to re-open your restaurant or other food premises. Part 1 provides advice on preparing your restaurant for food service, and Part 2 helps you to modify your premises and practices to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Only restaurants and bars that meet the following conditions are permitted to open at this time: patrons must be served at an outdoor dining area (patio) or through take-out, drive-through or delivery service. You are not permitted to start operating dine-in services until the provincial government passes an Order or Regulation under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act to specifically permit dine-in services. Please note that announcement may contain conditions that may result in changes, amendments to Part 2 of this document. When the provincial government's Order or Regulation permitting dine-in services comes into force, you will be informed of the changes as soon as possible. Please check the City's website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19 for updates and new information.

If you have a specific question about anything in this document, please call Toronto Public Health (TPH) at 416-338-7600, email DineSafe@toronto.ca or visit <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/>

Part 1: Food Premises Pre-Opening Checklist

The following are recommended actions to be taken prior to opening your establishment for business:

- ✓ Check the condition of all food and discard expired or otherwise unfit products.
- ✓ Wash, rinse and sanitize all food contact surfaces.
- ✓ Ensure hand washing stations are adequate and functional.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect all non-food contact surfaces, including high touch areas such as door handles and equipment knobs.
- ✓ Check thoroughly for signs of pest activity. Consider contracting a licenced pest management company prior to opening to ensure there is no infestation.
- ✓ Clean, sanitize and ensure all hot and cold holding facilities/equipment are functional.
- ✓ Where applicable, ensure dishwashing machines are functioning adequately.
- ✓ Ensure adequate amounts of sanitizers and detergents are available for manual dishwashing.
- ✓ Ensure garbage storage areas are clean and of adequate size for the needs.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect washrooms, and ensure adequate supplies are available.
- ✓ Ensure faucets are working properly and flush pipes for at least five minutes.
- ✓ Consider training staff on new procedures/requirements.

Part 2: Guidance for the Re-Opening of Food Premises

This guide describes the requirements of TPH for the re-opening and operation of retail food premises within the city of Toronto.

COVID-19 Transmission

[COVID-19](#) is spread mainly from person-to-person through close contact from respiratory droplets of someone with COVID-19. The respiratory droplets can travel up to two metres/six feet when we cough, sneeze or talk.

It is possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes. This new virus can survive on plastic and stainless steel surfaces for [up to 72 hours](#).

Main measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in food premises

- [Physical distancing](#) by keeping a two metre/six foot distance from both staff and customers.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of all potentially contaminated surfaces.

Additional protective measures to keep everyone safe

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash hands often. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wear a [face mask or covering](#) when in an enclosed, public setting.

Maintain logs for customer and staff contact information

- Operators of dining - in food service establishments are encouraged to keep logs of the name and contact information from one person in each party and staff, with date, check in and check out times.
- If there is a case of COVID-19 who was contagious while at the restaurant, public health will use that list to notify the staff and customers.

The owners/operators of food premises must ensure that the above requirements are met. The guidance below describes how these requirements might be implemented, but operators are ultimately responsible for providing an environment that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Operators should also refer to guidance from the [Ministry of Labour](#). This Ministry guidance supplements, but does not replace, guidance from TPH about food safety, or the Ontario Food Premises Regulations.

There is no requirement for restaurants to be inspected by TPH before reopening. However, if you have a new restaurant, you must contact TPH before opening to arrange for an inspection.

Before Re-Opening

Prepare the physical space

- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark as unavailable, to meet BOTH of these conditions:
 - Minimum of two metres/six feet between each edge of every table, with allowance for movement and seated patrons (where applicable) AND
 - No more than 50% of the rated capacity available for use.
- Consider reservations only.
- No more than six customers should be seated at each table.
- Remove waiting area seating, and create a process to ensure that customers stay separate and maintain physical distancing while waiting to be seated.
- Demarcate floor with markers for any areas where a line up may occur.

- Keep chairs well away from high traffic areas if possible.
- Rearrange equipment and/or processes in the kitchen and other areas used by staff so that a two metre/six foot distance is achievable at all times. If not feasible, staff must wear masks.
- If necessary, rearrange pick-up by servers to maintain distance (e.g. use the bar as a serving area).
- If necessary, install barriers (e.g. plexiglass) to protect staff (e.g. host desk) or customers (e.g. between back-to-back booths).
- Remove buffets, self-serve locations, and self-serve drink dispensing machines.
- Reconfigure break rooms/areas and eating areas for staff to physically distance.
- Provide direction to customers:
 - Install directional arrows (e.g. at entrance/exit) if possible.
 - Erect signage for physical distancing, [passive screening](#),¹ and any policies affecting them.
- The use of non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, as per a new City [bylaw](#). Operators are required to develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks. More information is available [here](#).

Develop Protocols

- Policies for customers: for example, reservations preferred/only; payment by card preferred/only.
- Menus: single-use paper, online for customers' mobile devices, menu-boards, chalkboards, or regular menus cleaned between uses.
- Tables: do not pre-set tables; utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Table items: replace regular condiments with single-serve versions, or sanitise between uses, consider disposable napkins, etc.
- Staffing: for example, stagger shifts, stagger breaks and lunch breaks, update absence policies, and new protocols for back filling absences.
 - Note that [active screening](#)² and not allowing staff to work if showing symptoms of COVID-19 are required policies. Staff must report any symptoms developed during shift to their supervisor.
 - Staff should be aware of COVID-19 precautions, and physically distance as much as possible, including with other staff. Staff congregating can be a high risk for COVID-19 transmission.
- Signage: post [signs](#) on handwashing, physical distancing, reporting symptoms, and make them visible to staff and customers.
- Cleaning and disinfecting: update protocols for cleaning/disinfecting surfaces and equipment.
 - Give attention to key touch points and objects (e.g. food contact surfaces, hand contact areas, door handles, switches, table tops, chairs, sneeze guards, restrooms, taps, utensils and dispensers).
 - Shared equipment such as credit card machines and cash registers.
 - Consider installing devices such as automatic doors and lights, electronic taps etc.
 - Specify and obtain approved hard-surface cleaning materials.
- Thoroughly clean the premises before opening.
- More details on cleaning and disinfection are available at Public Health Ontario's [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#).

¹ Passive screening: Customers screen themselves by following steps described on a poster

² Active Screening: Staff are screened by someone prompting them with questions

Revised July 6, 2020

- Supply dispensers for hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) to staff and customers, including at the door.
- Minimise unnecessary contact between customers and staff (e.g. place clearly visible numbers on tables and ask customers to seat themselves. Minimise the time staff spend within two metres/six feet of customers).
- Record the name and contact information for each reservation, with the time and date, which can be used by public health in the event contact tracing is required (see below).

Train Staff

- Train staff on how best to serve food, maintain safe physical distancing and avoid unnecessary handling (e.g. serve to front of table and let customers distribute, avoid handling coffee cups when refilling, let customer fill/pack leftovers in containers).
- Install directional arrows to direct employees and minimize direct contact.
- Practice physical distancing during breaks.
- Assign staff to specific tasks and minimize contact between them.
- Ensure staff have access to gloves and masks as needed.
 - Train staff in proper use of gloves and masks. Gloves are not essential, but, if used, must be changed frequently and hands washed between uses.
- Encourage frequent handwashing using the correct technique, and to avoid touching the face.
- Keep a staff log of when and where staff worked, with contact information, in case it is required for contact tracing by public health.

During Active Operation

- The owner/operator, or another person appointed for that purpose, should be present and checking to ensure adherence to protocols.
- Screening of staff for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in a food premises is critical. All measures must be taken to ensure staff are well before interacting with customers and colleagues. Ensure that active screening of each employee occurs before each shift.
 - Do not allow staff members who are sick to come to work. If staff are sick they should go home and stay at home. They should also be advised to complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) and/or contact their primary health provider and get tested.
- Ensure customers are physically distancing while waiting; have them wait outdoors when necessary, but ensure that they do not impinge on the space of diners on the patio.
- Customers who exhibit [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 should be refused entry. Display [posters](#) telling customers if they have symptoms they cannot enter.
- All customers must be seated; service to standing customers (e.g. in bar areas) is prohibited.
- Make sure that tables are cleaned and sanitized at least daily and between sittings.
- Maintain cleaning and sanitation logs.
- Consider opening doors and/or windows to increase ventilation.
- Loud music is prohibited. If you provide recorded music, turn down the volume. Loud music causes diners to lean towards each other and raise their voices or shout, thus increasing the risk of transmitting the virus. No dancing or singing may be permitted in the outdoor dining areas.

- Assist TPH in tracing contacts of COVID-19 cases. Ensure that you obtain a first name and telephone number (or e-mail address) from one person in each party (this may be provided when making a reservation), and keep this, together with a record of the table number and the date and time for at least 30 days. This information may be requested by TPH to assist with tracing contacts of someone who ate at your restaurant and subsequently developed COVID-19. You may also be required to post a notice of data collection.

Patios

Restaurants are encouraged to provide patios wherever feasible. Patios provide conditions which inhibit the survival and spread of the COVID-19 virus. The rules for physical distancing, service, and cleaning and sanitation that apply to the indoor area of the food premises also apply to patios. Patios must also comply with all City of Toronto requirements, available online at toronto.ca/cafeto.

Requirements for patio dining are as follows:

- A roof, canopy, tent, awning or other covering is permitted for outdoor dining.
- At least two full sides of the outdoor dining area must be open to the outdoors and must not be substantially blocked in any way.
- If the outdoor dining area has a retractable roof, the roof must be fully open and at least one full side must be open to the outdoors and must not be substantially blocked in any way.
- Configure the space to ensure physical distancing of at least two metres/six feet between patrons seated at different tables.
- Temporary table dividers may be installed to make physical distancing easier for restaurants with communal seating or larger tables.
- Groups must be seated two metres/six feet from another group.
- Ensure that a distance of two metres/six feet is maintained between customers or groups that are together. Co-mingling should be avoided.
- Limit the time servers spend within two metres/six feet of customers.
- Allow space for the safe circulation of customers and staff.
- Consider a reservation system to avoid lines of waiting customers.
- Ensure that lines of waiting customers do not come close to patio customers.
- Demarcate floor with markers for any areas where a line-up may occur.
- Mark direction of travel to designate entrances and exits, pick up areas and washrooms.
- Post signage promoting physical distancing upon entry.
- Provide one or more means of exiting the premises.
- When only outside dining is permitted, public access to any indoor portions of the business must be limited to food pickup, payment, washroom access, access required to get to the outdoor dining area, or access that is otherwise required for the purposes of health and safety. In the event of rainfall, dine-in service is still not permitted.

Download and Print Posters for your Restaurant

[Physical distancing](#)

[Protect yourself](#)

[Cover your cough](#)

[How to safely put on and take off a mask](#)

[Posters and staff screening questionnaires](#)

Additional Resources

[Province of Ontario Restaurant and Food Services Health and Safety During COVID-19](#)

[Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Restaurant Servers, Cooks and Dishwashers during COVID-19](#)

More information

For more information, visit our website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19, email DineSafe@toronto.ca, or call us at 416-338-7600.